

Bush ‘Roasted’ in Tradition of Rabelais, Boccaccio

by Nancy Spannaus

We have it on good authority that the next time that President George W. Bush signs a piece of legislation and attaches a Presidential Signing Statement, it will read that the President interprets the law to mean: “Kill Stephen Colbert!” The Comedy Central TV comedian truly roasted President Bush on Saturday night, April 29, with the President and the First Lady seated at the podium just a few feet away. As Lyndon LaRouche observed later, Bush will probably never recover from the roasting. He can be compared to the naked Emperor, parading in his “new clothes” before a credulous and dutiful collection of subjects, until Stephen Colbert, disguised as a little boy, shouted out, “Daddy, but he has nothing on!” Bush has, according to reliable sources close to the White House, gone into a near total state of rage. He reportedly did 28 hours of non-stop exercise on Sunday, in what has been already described as the longest, uninterrupted attempt—albeit failed—at anger management in Presidential history.

Bush is coming apart. And nothing that the *Washington Post* and other media sycophants try to do to put Bush back together again is going to work. The establishment media blackout of the Saturday night roast has totally failed, and their claims that Colbert just “wasn’t funny” have fallen flat. Out in the blog world, the Colbert video-stream is everywhere. (We include the transcript here, but urge you to find the video.) The nature of the animal roasted on the spit on Saturday night is clear for all the world to see. This is no joke. This was a really historic event, that will have long-term ramifications.

LaRouche situated Colbert’s performance on April 29 at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner in the tradition of

Boccaccio, Rabelais, and Cervantes. All of these great “roasters” lived in times when civilization was collapsing, when culture was hitting the bottom, and nations were crumbling. They used devastating humor to capture the tragedy of the day and rally people to fight for a better world. Boccaccio was not available, so Stephen Colbert stood in for him—and did an admirable job. The Bush Administration is the emblem of our cultural degeneration, and Stephen Colbert was provided with the opportunity to do the roasting of Bush and Cheney.

This is significant, because it gives the sense, clearly, that leading U.S. institutions are ripe for facing this reality. Someone clearly arranged for Colbert to deliver the final word on George W, by making him the speaker. This is, LaRouche emphasized, a significant comment on our nation and our civilization. There are two kinds of people: Those who were able to howl with laughter at what Colbert did in his roast, and those who live in a house of prostitution and don’t wish to be seen slinking out the back door. Clearly the *Washington Post* runs the biggest whorehouse in town, judging from the lies they published, trying to pooh-pooh the impact of the Colbert roast.

What Colbert hit upon goes deeper than Bush himself. How about the millions of Americans who voted for Bush and Cheney—twice? How degenerate are they? What would Boccaccio have said about them in his *Decameron*? What would Rabelais have said? Or Cervantes? What needs to be attacked is the controlling culture itself, which is now disintegrating, and this is a task for great artistic thinking. Bush was voted in as President as a certifiable fool, and he has lived up to that promise of incompetence.



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Stephen Colbert's "roast" of President Bush had the quality of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes," as well as the ironical stories of the great Renaissance humorists, Boccaccio and Rabelais.

The Tradition of Classical Irony: Boccaccio

The method which Colbert was emulating, albeit on a lower level, is a time-honored humanist one, which is associated with famous humorists who emerged during periods of unspeakable tragedy for mankind, in order to raise up the population with laughter at the flaws which had led them into their fate. Particularly notable are the three whom LaRouche mentioned: the Italian Giovanni Boccaccio (ca. 1313-1387), the Frenchman François Rabelais (ca. 1494-1553), and the Spaniard Miguel Cervantes (1547-1616).

Giovanni Boccaccio, man of letters from 14th Century Florence, presents a case in point. In his masterwork, *The Decameron*, which was written in 1350, in the immediate aftermath of the Black Death, Boccaccio foregoes the moralistic or didactic approach, in order to recount a series of stories, which were allegedly told by a group of young noblewomen and men who left Florence under the pall of the plague that was decimating the city, both physically and morally. In one tale after another, Boccaccio's characters poke fun at the venality of priests, husbands, wives, rulers, and others, exposing their hypocrisy, stupidity, and greed in a manner which cannot help but bring smiles, if not guffaws, to his readers' lips.

In his introduction to *The Decameron*, Boccaccio paints a horrific, and truthful, scene of the Florence which had been his home, and which suffered, as did much of Europe, from the deadly epidemic of Bubonic Plague which reduced the

population of Europe by anywhere from one-third to one-half. He notes the way in which the frightful disease destroyed the city, leading people to leave their families for the sake of self-preservation, or to take advantage of others who were unable to defend themselves or their own interests. Rich and poor, virtuous and debauched, all were stricken and left bereft.

"Some people were of the opinion that a sober and abstemious mode of living considerably reduced the risk of infection," he writes. "They refrained from speaking to outsiders, refused to receive news of the dead or the sick, and entertained themselves with music and whatever other amusements they were able to devise. . . . Others took the opposite view, and maintain that an infallible way of warding off this appalling evil was to drink heavily, enjoy life to the full, go around singing and merry-making, gratify all of one's cravings whenever the opportunity offered, and shrug the whole thing off as one enormous joke," Boccaccio wrote.

"In the face of so much affliction and misery, all respect for the laws of God and man had virtually broken down and been extinguished in our city," he observed.

Could there be a more apt summary of the collapse of culture today, in terms of the willful refusal of most sections of the population to face, and deal with, the reality of the spread of poverty and despair? Yet, rather than preach, Boccaccio chose to tell often bawdy stories which would make his readers laugh at themselves, and their rulers, and thus prepare themselves to rise above their petty concerns to deal with the problems they faced.

Like Colbert, Boccaccio was attacked for having taken "too many liberties" with his language and subject, thus offending the "proper" sensibilities of his readers. He points out that the corruption is in the mind of the reader, not the language. After all, how many people who have steeped themselves in the Holy Scripture, have led themselves and others to perdition?

The Laughter of Rabelais

Physician, poet, and monk, François Rabelais' name has become virtually synonymous with the use of biting, ribald humor, as a means of taking on a stupefied, and fearful, population. Rabelais did his work in the early part of the 16th Century, writing his famous *Gargantua and Pantagruel* in 1532. This was a period of increasingly intense religious



Miguel Cervantes' Don Quixote takes the reader into the world of insanity of the crazed knight—which reflects back on the ills and lunacy of the Spain of his time. Here, Quixote with the prostitute Maritornes, whom he hails as the epitome of virtue. Illustration by Gustave Doré.

conflict, under the dominance of the Hapsburg dynasty and the Venetians, a conflict that would eventually lay waste to central Europe in the 1618-1648 Thirty Years War.

Rabelais was a follower of the humanist Desiderius Erasmus (who himself wrote a famous humorous book entitled *In Praise of Folly*), who was dedicated to trying to overthrow the Aristotelian horrors which had taken over the minds of the educated and uneducated alike in France. But, how to do it? In the period he was writing, those who criticized the clergy were subject to immediate retaliation, including the possibility of being convicted of heresy and burned at the stake. Rabelais' chosen recourse was humor.

"Better to laugh, than to end up roasted like grilled herrings," declared Pantagruel, one of Rabelais' larger-than-life heroes. With this in mind, Pantagruel, and his father Gargantua, are presented by Rabelais as carrying out outrageous, and outrageously funny, assaults on backward monks, manipulative and hypocritical churchmen, scholastic teachers, lawyers, courtiers, and any ordinary, small-minded individuals who clung to the feudal disease of oligarchism.

In his introduction to *Gargantua*, Rabelais presents a case for his approach. He argues that, "it is better to write about laughter than about tears, since laughter is the characteristic of man," and urges his readers to look deeper into his stories than the surface. He writes:

"Now what do you think is the purpose of this preamble, of this preliminary flourish? Is it that you, my good disciples and other leisured fools, in reading the pleasant titles of

certain books of our invention, such as *Gargantua*, *Pantagruel*, *Toss-Pint*, *On the Dignity of Codpieces*, *Of Peas and Bacon*, *Cum Commento*, may not too easily conclude that they treat of nothing but mockery, fooling, and pleasant fictions; seeing that their outward signs—their titles, that is—are commonly greeted, without further investigation, with smiles and derision. It is wrong, however, to set such small store by the works of men. For, as you yourself say, the clothes do not make the man; some wear a monkish cloak who are the very reverse of monkish inside, and some sport a Spanish cape who are far from Spanish in their courage. That is the reason why you must open this book, and carefully weigh up its contents. You will discover then that the drug within is far more valuable than the box promised; that is to say, that the subjects here treated are not so foolish as the title on the cover suggested.

"But even suppose that in the literal meanings you find jolly enough nonsense, in perfect keeping with the title, you must still not be deterred, as by the Siren's song, but must interpret in a more sublime sense what you may possibly have thought, at first, was uttered in mere light-heartedness."

Cervantes' 'Don Quixote'

Following fast on the heels of Rabelais was Spain's most famous humorist, Miguel Cervantes, who lived under two of the most cruel Inquisition-run Hapsburg tyrants of that nation, Kings Philip II and III. Cervantes wrote his immortal *Don Quixote* in the early 1600s, as a hilarious means of

holding up a mirror to the decadent society of which he was a part.

Cervantes too was an Erasmian, who used humor to present one paradox after another to his readers. He is widely thought to have modelled his Quixote on Philip II, a monarch who started off emitting good intentions, but ended up setting Spain on the path to decay, by clinging to the anti-Renaissance, Aristotelean Counter-Reformation.

A touch of the irony, and paradox, which Cervantes is invoking comes through in the statement by Don Quixote, which appears in Part II, Chapter 17:

“No doubt, senor Don Diego de Miranda, you set me down in your mind as a fool and a madman, and it would be no wonder if you did, for my deeds do not argue anything else. But for all that, I would have you take notice that I am neither so mad nor so foolish as I must have seemed to you. A gallant knight shows to advantage bringing his lance to bear adroitly upon a fierce bull under the eyes of his sovereign, in the midst of a spacious plaza; a knight shows to advantage arrayed in glittering armour, pacing the lists before the ladies in some joyous tournament, and all those knights show to advantage that entertain, divert, and, if we may say so, honor the courts of their princes by warlike exercises, or what resemble them; but to greater advantage than all these does a knight-errant show when he traverses deserts, solitudes, crossroads, forests, and mountains, in quest of perilous adventures, bent on bringing them to a happy and successful issue, all to win a glorious and lasting renown.”

Cervantes thus poses the question: Who is the true madman? The Don who tilts at windmills? Or the Spanish grandee who gains honor by fighting a bull in front of his king? A similar question could be asked today, as, in fact, Colbert did: Who is the bigger fool? The President who chooses his opinions by the “gut,” regardless of truth? Or the press (and implicitly, population) which permits him to do that, or does the same?

Whither the Bush Administration?

Colbert’s roast brought some devastating truth to light, regardless of the “official” denials that have prevailed. And, in its aftermath, the process of disintegration of the Bush Administration which that roast reflected, has continued apace.

The President’s popularity has sunk even lower, and his Administration’s grip on the Congress, specifically, the ruling Republican leadership, continues to be precarious, and slipping. Only the pusillanimity of the Democratic Party leadership prevents the Congress from acting to reassert its constitutional powers, and to derail the plunge into a Dark Age which will be equivalent to, or worse than, that which Boccaccio and his contemporaries faced.

But ultimately, as LaRouche’s comments imply, the obstacle to the Democrats, and sane Republicans, taking the



Panurge seeks the advice of Pantagruel and his friends as to whether he should marry.

“Better to laugh, than to end up roasted like grilled herrings,” declared Pantagruel, one of Rabelais’ larger-than-life heroes, whom we see depicted here with his father Gargantua. Rabelais took this same approach in roasting his opponents with humor.

right action, is that they are controlled by the same cultural disease which has produced George W. Bush, and his Administration. Beneath the varying political positions, lies an axiomatic commitment to choosing comfort, and “feelings,” and all other kinds of sophistry, over the necessity of tackling the problems of mankind by application of thought, principle, and truth. The way in which certain leading liberal columnists and legislators, including Democratic Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (Md.), rushed to attack Colbert, exemplifies the seriousness of this problem.

Fortunately, there is a solution at hand, as the emergence of the LaRouche Youth Movement’s role in the Democratic Party, and the ever-increasing credibility of LaRouche’s approach to the crisis, demonstrate. We can not only afford to laugh at Colbert’s brave, and incisive, roast of the President; we can’t afford not to.

Colbert Slams Bush and The Hypocritical Press

A transcript of Steven Colbert's remarks to the White House Correspondents' Dinner, April 29, 2006, appears below. Source: <http://dailykos.com/storyonly/2006/4/30/1441/59811>.

Stephen Colbert: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Before I begin, I've been asked to make an announcement. Whoever parked 14 black bulletproof S.U.V.'s out front, could you please move them? They are blocking in 14 other black bulletproof S.U.V.'s, and they need to get out.

Wow. Wow, what an honor. The White House correspondents' dinner. To actually sit here, at the same table with my hero, George W. Bush, to be this close to the man. I feel like I'm dreaming. Somebody pinch me. You know what? I'm a pretty sound sleeper—that may not be enough. Somebody shoot me in the face. Is he really not here tonight? Dammit. The one guy who could have helped.

By the way, before I get started, if anybody needs anything else at their tables, just speak slowly and clearly into your table numbers. Somebody from the NSA will be right over with a cocktail. Mark Smith, ladies and gentlemen of the press corps, Madame First Lady, Mr. President, my name is Stephen Colbert and tonight it's my privilege to celebrate this President. We're not so different, he and I. We get it. We're not brainiacs on the nerd patrol. We're not members of the factinista. We go straight from the gut, right sir? That's where the truth lies, right down here in the gut. Do you know you have more nerve endings in your gut than you have in your head? You can look it up. I know some of you are going to say I did look it up, and that's not true. That's cause you looked it up in a book.

Next time, look it up in your gut. I did. My gut tells me that's how our nervous system works. Every night on my show, the Colbert Report, I speak straight from the gut, OK? I give people the truth, unfiltered by rational argument. I call it the "No Fact Zone." Fox News, I hold a copyright on that term.

I'm a simple man with a simple mind. I hold a simple set of beliefs that I live by. Number one, I believe in America. I believe it exists. My gut tells me I live there. I feel that it extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and I strongly believe it has 50 states. And I cannot wait to see how the *Washington Post* spins that one tomorrow. I believe in democracy. I believe democracy is our greatest export. At least until China figures out a way to stamp it out of plastic for three cents a unit.

In fact, Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong, welcome. Your great country makes our Happy Meals possible. I said it's a

celebration. I believe the government that governs best is the government that governs least. And by these standards, we have set up a *fabulous* government in Iraq.

I believe in pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps. I believe it is possible—I saw this guy do it once in Cirque du Soleil. It was magical. And though I am a committed Christian, I believe that everyone has the right to their own religion, be you Hindu, Jewish, or Muslim. I believe there are infinite paths to accepting Jesus Christ as your personal savior.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe it's yogurt. But I refuse to believe it's not butter. Most of all, I believe in this President.

Now, I know there are some polls out there saying this man has a 32% approval rating. But guys like us, we don't pay attention to the polls. We know that polls are just a collection of statistics that reflect what people are thinking in "reality." And reality has a well-known liberal bias.

So, Mr. President, please, pay no attention to the people that say the glass is half full. 32% means the glass—it's important to set up your jokes properly, sir. Sir, pay no attention to the people who say the glass is half empty, because 32% means it's 2/3 empty. There's still some liquid in that glass is my point, but I wouldn't drink it. The last third is usually backwash. Okay, look, folks, my point is that I don't believe this is a low point in this Presidency. I believe it is just a lull before a comeback.

I mean, it's like the movie "Rocky." All right. The President in this case is Rocky Balboa and Apollo Creed is—everything else in the world. It's the tenth round. He's bloodied. His corner man, Mick, who in this case I guess would be the Vice President, he's yelling, "Cut me, Dick, cut me!," and every time he falls everyone says, "Stay down! Stay down!" Does he stay down? No. Like Rocky, he gets back up, and in the end he—actually, he loses in the first movie.

OK. Doesn't matter. The point is it is the heart-warming story of a man who was repeatedly punched in the face. So don't pay attention to the approval ratings that say 68% of Americans disapprove of the job this man is doing. I ask you this, does that not also logically mean that 68% approve of the job he's not doing? Think about it. I haven't.

I stand by this man. I stand by this man because he stands for things. Not only for things, he stands *on* things. Things like aircraft carriers, and rubble, and recently flooded city squares. And that sends a strong message, that no matter what happens to America, she will always rebound—with the most powerfully staged photo ops in the world.

Now, there may be an energy crisis. This President has a very forward-thinking energy policy. Why do you think he's down on the ranch cutting that brush all the time? He's trying to create an alternative energy source. By 2008 we will have a mesquite-powered car!

And I just like the guy. He's a good joe. Obviously loves his wife, calls her his better half. And polls show America agrees. She's a true lady and a wonderful woman. But I just have one beef, ma'am.

I'm sorry, but this reading initiative. I'm sorry, I've never



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President Bush became more and more enraged as Colbert continued, and finally left in a white fury.

In what people thought was going to be a spoof, comedian Stephen Colbert ironically exposed the truth about President Bush and his Administration, and went after the media for its complicity in the Administration's disastrous policies.

been a fan of books. I don't trust them. They're all fact, no heart. I mean, they're elitist, telling us what is or isn't true, or what did or didn't happen. Who's *Britannica* to tell me the Panama Canal was built in 1914? If I want to say it was built in 1941, that's my right as an American! I'm with the President, let history decide what did or did not happen.

The greatest thing about this man is he's steady. You know where he stands. He believes the same thing Wednesday that he believed on Monday, no matter what happened Tuesday. Events can change; this man's beliefs never will. As excited as I am to be here with the President, I am *appalled* to be surrounded by the liberal media that is destroying America, with the exception of Fox News. Fox News gives you both sides of every story: the President's side, and the Vice President's side.

But the rest of you, what are you thinking, reporting on NSA wiretapping or secret prisons in eastern Europe? Those things are secret for a very important reason: they're super-depressing. And if that's your goal, well, misery accomplished. Over the last five years you people were so good—over tax cuts, WMD intelligence, the effect of global warming. We Americans didn't want to know, and you had the courtesy not to try to find out. Those were good times, as far as we knew.

But, listen, let's review the rules. Here's how it works: the President makes decisions. He's the decider. The press secretary announces those decisions, and you people of the press type those decisions down. Make, announce, type. Just put 'em through a spell check and go home. Get to know your family again. Make love to your wife. Write that novel you got kicking around in your head. You know, the one about the intrepid Washington reporter with the courage to stand up to the administration. You know—fiction!

Because really, what incentive do these people have to answer your questions, after all? I mean, nothing satisfies you.

Everybody asks for personnel changes. So the White House has personnel changes. Then you write, "Oh, they're just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic." First of all, that is a terrible metaphor. This Administration is not sinking. This Administration is *soaring*. If anything, they are rearranging the deck chairs on the Hindenburg!

Now, it's not all bad guys out there. Some are heroes: Christopher Buckley, Jeff Sacks, Ken Burns, Bob Schieffer. They've all been on my show. By the way, Mr. President, thank you for agreeing to be on my show. I was just as shocked as everyone here is, I promise you. How's Tuesday for you? I've got Frank Rich, but we can *bump him*. And I mean bump him. I know a guy. Say the word.

See who've we got here tonight. General Moseley, Air Force chief of staff. Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They still support Rumsfeld. Right, you guys aren't retired yet, right? Right, they still support Rumsfeld.

Look, by the way, I've got a theory about how to handle these retired generals causing all this trouble: don't let them retire! Come on, we've got a stop-loss program; let's use it on these guys. I've seen Zinni and that crowd on Wolf Blitzer. If you're strong enough to go on one of those pundit shows, you can stand on a bank of computers and order men into battle. Come on.

Jesse Jackson is here, the Reverend. Haven't heard from the Reverend in a little while. I had him on the show. Very interesting and challenging interview. You can ask him anything, but he's going to say what he wants, at the pace that he wants. It's like boxing a glacier. Enjoy that metaphor, by the way, because your grandchildren will have no idea what a glacier is.

Justice Scalia is here. Welcome, sir. May I be the first to say, you look fantastic. How are you? [After each sentence,

Colbert makes a hand gesture, an allusion to Scalia's recent use of an obscene Sicilian hand gesture in speaking to a reporter about Scalia's critics. Scalia is seen laughing.] Just talking some Sicilian with my *paisan*.

John McCain is here. John McCain, John McCain, what a maverick! Somebody find out what fork he used on his salad, because I guarantee you it wasn't a salad fork. This guy could have used a spoon! There's no predicting him. By the way, Senator McCain, it's so wonderful to see you coming back into the Republican fold. I have a summer house in South Carolina; look me up when you go to speak at Bob Jones University. So glad you've seen the light, sir.

Mayor Nagin! Mayor Nagin is here from New Orleans, the chocolate city! Yeah, give it up. Mayor Nagin, I'd like to welcome you to Washington, D.C., the chocolate city with a marshmallow center. And a graham cracker crust of corruption. It's a Mallomar, I guess is what I'm describing, a seasonal cookie.

Joe Wilson is here, Joe Wilson right down here in front, the most famous husband since Desi Arnaz. And of course he brought along his lovely wife Valerie Plame. Oh, my god! Oh, what have I said? [looks horrified] I am sorry, Mr. President, I meant to say he brought along his lovely wife, Joe Wilson's wife. Patrick Fitzgerald is not here tonight? OK. Dodged a bullet.

And, of course, we can't forget the man of the hour, new press secretary, Tony Snow. Secret Service name, "Snow Job." Toughest job. What a hero! Took the second toughest job in government, next to, of course, the ambassador to Iraq.

Got some big shoes to fill, Tony. Big shoes to fill. Scott McClellan could say nothing like nobody else. McClellan, of course, eager to retire. Really felt like he needed to spend more time with Andrew Card's children. Mr. President, I wish you hadn't made the decision so quickly, sir.

I was vying for the job myself. I think I would have made a fabulous press secretary. I have nothing but contempt for these people. I know how to handle these clowns. In fact, sir, I brought along an audition tape, and with your indulgence, I'd like to at least give it a shot. So, ladies and gentlemen, my press conference.

'Audition Tape'

Colbert shows a video of a mock press conference. It opens with an empty podium; Colbert's head rises from behind the podium until he is standing at the podium. He addresses the assembled Washington press corps.

Colbert: I have a brief statement: The press is destroying America. OK, let's see who we've got here today (acknowledging various reporters)

Stretch! (David Gregory nods)

Sir Nerdlington! (reporter nods)

Sloppy Joe! (reporter nods)

Terry Lemon Moran Pie! (Terry Moran nods)

Oh, Doubting Thomas, always a pleasure. (Helen Thomas smiles)

And Suzanne Mal—hello!!

(Suzanne Malveaux stares at Colbert, looking unhappy. Colbert mimics putting a phone to his ear and mouths "call me.")

Reporter: Will the Vice President be available soon to answer all questions himself?

Colbert: I've already addressed that question. You (pointing to another reporter).

Bill Jones of EIR: Walter Cronkite, the noted CBS anchor—

Colbert: (interrupting) Ah, no, he's the *former* CBS anchor. Katie Couric is the new anchor of the CBS Evening News. Well, well, how do you guys feel about that? You, tousle-haired guy in the back. Are you happy about Katie Couric taking over the CBS Evening News?

Dan Rather: No, sir, Mr. Colbert. Are you?

Colbert: Boom! Oh, look, we woke David Gregory up. Question?

David Gregory: Did Karl Rove commit a crime?

Colbert: I don't know. I'll ask him. (Turns to Rove) Karl, pay attention, please! (Rove is seen drawing a heart with "Karl + Stephen" written on it.)

Gregory: Do you stand by your statement from the Fall of 2003 when you were asked specifically about Karl, and Elliott Abrams, and Scooter Libby, and you said, "I've gone to each of those gentlemen, and they have told me that they are not involved in this." Do you stand by that statement?

Colbert: Nah, I was just kidding!

Gregory: No, you're not finishing. You're not saying anything! You stood at that podium and said—

Colbert: (interrupting) Ah, that's where you're wrong. New podium! Just had it delivered today. Get your facts straight, David.

Gregory: This is ridiculous. The notion that you're going to stand before us after having commented with that level of detail, and tell the people watching this that somehow you've decided not to talk. You've got to—. (Colbert is seen looking at three buttons on the podium, labeled "EJECT," "GAN-NON" and "VOLUME." He selects the "VOLUME" button and turns it. Gregory's lips continue moving, but no sound comes out.)

Colbert: If I can't hear you, I can't answer your question. I'm sorry! I have to move on. Terry.

Terry Moran: After the investigation began, after the criminal investigation was under way, you said—. (Colbert presses



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EIR's Washington correspondent Bill Jones was shown at a White House briefing, in Colbert's spoof "audition tape," supposedly Colbert's attempt to get the job of White House press secretary.

a button on the podium and fast-forwards through most of Moran's question. Moran continues) All of a sudden, you have respect for the sanctity of a criminal investigation?

Colbert: (seen playing with rubber ball, which he is bouncing off an attached paddle) No, I never had any respect for the sanctity of a criminal investigation. Activist judges! Yes, Helen.

Helen Thomas: You're going to be sorry.

Colbert: (looking vastly amused, mockingly) What are you going to do, Helen, ask me for a recipe?

Thomas: Your decision to invade Iraq has caused the deaths of thousands (Colbert's smile fades) of Americans and Iraqis, wounds of Americans and Iraqis for a lifetime.

Colbert: (interrupting) OK, hold on Helen, look—

Thomas: (continuing) Every reason given, publicly at least, has turned out not to be true. My question is why did you really want to go to war?

Colbert: (again interrupting) Helen, I'm going to stop you right there. (Thomas keeps talking.) That's enough! No! Sorry, Helen, I'm moving on. (Colbert tries to turn her volume off, but the knob falls off his controls.)

(Various reporters start shouting questions at Colbert.)

Colbert: (agitated) Guys, guys, please don't let Helen do this to what was a lovely day. (Reporters keep shouting at him.)

Colbert: (putting his fingers over his ears and shouting in a high-pitched voice) Bllrrtt! No, no, no, no, no. I'm not listening to you! Look what you did, Helen! I hate you!

(Helen Thomas glowers at Colbert.)

Colbert: (frantic) I'm out of here! (Colbert pulls back the

curtain behind him, desperately trying to flee.) "There is a wall here!" (The press corps laughs. Colbert has difficulty finding a door from which to exit the room, echoing Bush's experience in China. He finally finds the door and hurries through it.)

Colbert: It reeks in there! Ridiculous! I've never been so insulted in my life! Stupid job. (He continues walking away. We hear sinister-sounding music playing. We see Helen Thomas walking behind Colbert. He looks behind him, sees Thomas, and starts running. He trips over a roller skate, and yells "Condi!" We see a close-up of Helen Thomas's face, looking determined and angry. Colbert, increasingly panicked, gets up and continues running, and dashes into a parking garage. He reaches an emergency call box, and yells into it.)

Colbert: Oh, thank God. Help me!

Attendant: What seems to be the problem, sir?

Colbert: She won't stop asking why we invaded Iraq!

Attendant: Hey, why *did* we invade Iraq?

Colbert: NO!!!

(He runs toward his car. We see Helen Thomas, still walking toward him. Colbert reaches his car, and fumblingly attempts to open it with his key. He is in such a desperate hurry that he fumbles with the keys and drops them. When he picks them up, he looks back and Helen is even closer. In his frantic rush, Colbert just can't get the keys into the lock. Just as his anxiety is getting completely out of control he suddenly remembers that he has a keyless remote—so he just pushes the button on the keychain and the car unlocks immediately with the usual double squeak noise. Colbert jumps in and locks the door, and continues to fumble trying to get the car started. He finally succeeds, and looks up to see Helen standing in front of the car, notepad in hand.)

Colbert: NO!!! NO!!!

(Colbert puts the car into reverse and drives off, tires squealing. Thomas smiles. Colbert is then shown taking the shuttle from Washington, D.C. to New York. A car and driver are waiting for him at Penn Station. The uniformed man standing alongside the car opens the door and lets Colbert in.)

Colbert: What a terrible trip, Danny. Take me home. (The driver locks the doors, turns around, and says, "Buckle up, hon." *IT'S HELEN THOMAS!!!*)

Colbert: (horrified face pressed against car window) NO!!!

End of 'Audition Tape'

Colbert: Helen Thomas, ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Smith, members of the White House Correspondents Association, Madame First Lady, Mr. President, it's been a true honor. Thank you very much. Good night!